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JONESBORO, ARKANSAS

News Letter

January, 1950

Dear Friends:



If one of your New Year's resolutions is to take better care of your violet collection, please don't include in your ritual of care such odd practices as feeding the plants fresh orange juice, washing the leaves with sour cream, and mixing face powder into the potting soil.

The unbounded enthusiasm of Violet collectors has led to some of the screwiest experiments the world has ever seen. Indeed, the African Violet is now the subject of as many old wive's tales as were circulated about childbirth fifty years ago. Now, really, girls!!

Fresh orange juice will not benefit African Violets or any other plant. On the contrary, when undecayed matter is used as part of a soil mixture or applied as a top dressing, one may expect an early demise of the plant. Vegetable matter (or garbage, or compost, or whatever you want to call it) is toxic if used before it thoroughly decomposed.

You may or may not be repelled by sour cream. The aim here, of course, is to produce a gloss on the foliage. Sweet cream or milk will do the same thing. (Anybody tried Glass Wax?) A product called Flora Glo also answers this purpose but care must be used to apply it to foliage only. It will burn the flowers.

Would advise saving this sort of grooming for state occasions, however. Remember that the more layers of goo you put on a leaf, the less sun filters through, which is also why you should keep the dust washed off. Don't worry about whether or not your violets can breathe, fer goodness' sake! Plants absorb and release various

gases through cells located on the reverse side of the leaves. So unless they're coated with mud or something, they'll "breathe" all right!!

Am unable to cope editorially with the use of face powder in the potting mixture. This unorthodox practice may have been suggested originally by the mistaken idea that talc is the same thing as powdered limestone, but my correspondent specified the shade—Rose Beige No. 2, if you're interested.

A good old down-home practice is to sprinkle snuff around the dirt in the pot to keep the bugs away. An occasional spraying with nicotine sulphate (Black Leaf 40) will keep away the same bugs more effectively and is much less embarrassing to purchase. As we have said before, nicotine sulphate is dandy for aphids. We still recommend NNOR for general all-round effectiveness.

The use of the terms "sweet" (for alkaline) and "sour" (acid) in reference to soils is confusing because of the thought-association with food. A "sweet" soil will not turn "sour", like milk. Once the soil is mixed, the reaction has been determined, and won't change unless other elements are introduced, say in the water or by scratching into the surface of the soil after the plants are potted up. If you put a piece of charcoal in each pot of dirt, for instance, you don't do it to KEEP the soil "sweet", but to MAKE it "sweet". See?

Ran across a bizarre theory the other day, to-wit: "The leaf immediately below the flower stalk exists only to support and nourish that particular group of flowers; when they fade, the supporting leaf may be removed since its function has been fulfilled and it is thereafter only a burden to the plant." Pfui.

Another theory with which we would take issue is the "sucker" idea. This theory maintains that small plants taken from a parent plant, or crown divisions, are of inferior quality and should be discarded. In our experience, this hasn't proved valid at all. Also, we note with interest the case histories of many prize-winning specimens which were originally removed from other plants as suckers. In propagation, where as many as six

or eight crowns come up at about the same time, how on earth would one know which was the "parent plant" and which were the "suckers"? It seems to us that attempting to separate the sheep from the goats in this manner is a waste of time. With proper care, any plant, regardless of its origin, can be expected to do equally well.

By the way, if you put down a leaf and a jillion little crowns come up, don't assume that something is wrong with it and throw it away, as one customer did. You've just hit the jack-pot, that's all. Division will be easier if you shift the whole mass to a three or four-inch pot and delay division until the tallest leaves measure about five inches high. Upon dividing, you will no doubt have some crowns with no roots at all. Prop these up on sand or vermiculite until they grow some "feet" of their own.

Cordially,

"Russ"

PRICE LIST

WE ARE SHIPPING BY THE WEATHER MAP.

If climatic conditions prevent filling your order, you will be notified, and shipment will be made as soon as possible. WE DO NOT BOOK ORDERS. If we are still unable to ship your plants ten days after we have received your order, your money will be returned, unless you request otherwise.

***Amethyst, West Coast**—Medium large plant. Pale orchid blossom in profusion. Dark, tapered foliage
\$1.50

***Bi-Color—or Red Bi-Color.** Two upper petals deep red-violet, three lower, pale lavender. Slick foliage. Large plant \$1.50

Blue Amazon—Dark velvety blue flowers. Heavy foliage \$1.75

***Blue Eyes**—Good-looking plant. Pale blue. Foliage very slick and dark. Rather flat habit of growth \$1.50



Sustaining Member African Violet Society of America, Inc.

Gift wrapping on request.

[illegible]

ARKANSAS CUSTOMERS: ADD 2% SALES TAX

Cut Along Dotted Line

***Blue Girl—**(Pat'd) Well known, by now, to all violet enthusiasts. Scalloped foliage, dark blue blossom ----- **\$1.25**

Blue Girl Amazon—Or Blue Girl Supreme. Ditto Blue Amazon except for leaf scalloping and white dot at base of leaf ----- **\$1.75**

***Blue Velvet—**Neat little plant. Dark green, quilted rather round leaves. Clear, medium blue blossom ----- **\$1.50**

***Blush Maid—**Blush Beauty, Blush Lady, Blushing Maiden. Lovely shell pink. Pink Beauty-type foliage ----- **\$1.25**

***Brown's Pet—**Darling little miniature Blue Girl. Sweet. Guaranteed distinct from any of the other Girl types offered by us ----- **\$2.00**

***Dickson's Purple—**A really fine variety. Intense blue. Fine foliage ----- **\$1.75**

***Dainty Maid—**Lovely little pink distinct for its White Lady foliage ----- **\$1.50**

***Double Duchess Amazon—or Double Duchess Supreme.** Dark blue, large double flower. For best blooming, divide these multiple-crown plants. They need generous root-room, generous fertilizing **\$2.00**

Double Orchid—Medium size plant. Leaf more tapered than Duchess, plant grows flatter. Lovely orchid shade ----- **\$2.00**

DuPont Hybrids No. 1 and No. 5—We have Silver Pink, too, but they sure are little. By now, everybody has heard about these or seen them. No. 1 is the darkest blue, No. 5 the lightest. Aristocrats, no less! ----- **\$2.50 ea.**

***DuPont Lavender Pink—**Bi-color tendency. Upper petals darker than lower. Distinct in color from Silver Pink which is much lighter ----- **\$1.75**

***Heavenly Blue—**Pale blue edition of Blue Boy. Been around a long time but can still hold its own ----- **\$1.50**

***Kewensis—**Light green foliage, medium pale blue flowers. Small plant with a mind of its own. You can't keep the suckers off it. Better to let it go ragged. Looks better that way, anyway ----- **\$1.75**

***Lavender Lady**—Lavender shade between West Coast Amethyst and Red Head. Dark green foliage. Medium size plant. Nice bloomer **\$1.50**

***Myrtle**—We've had grand results with this plant. Blooms very well. Pale green foliage, ripples with maturity. Medium dark green flowers held high **\$1.50**

***Old Lace**—Small plant. Deeply scalloped leaves with very pronounced white marking at base of leaf. Dark blue flowers carried quite high..... **\$2.00**

***Orchid Beauty**—or Mary Mac, Rosy Blue. Medium-sized, rather upright plant. Ovate leaves smooth and cupped downward. Flowers clear red-lavender produced freely above the foliage..... **\$1.25**

Pink Beauty—(Pat'd)—Well, everybody knows what this looks like **\$1.25**

***Purple Beauty**—Dark purple with slight rosy tinge. Glossy, quilted leaves with red reverse. Very popular **\$1.75**

***Red Girl**—(Orchid Girl) Familiar Girl foliage with red-lavender blooms which turn lighter orchid after they have opened. **\$1.50**

***Red Head**—One of the "redder" "reds." Rich claret shade. Slick, tailored foliage. A continuing favorite **\$1.75**

***Rose Purple**—Remarkable plant for its tremendous size. If you plan to enter a plant in a show next fall, buy one of these now. Medium dark blue with reddish tinge. Tailored foliage **\$2.00**

***Ruffles**—Extremely dark green tapered leaves with red-purple reverse.. Flowers medium blue **\$2.00**

***Sapphire**—Old standby. An excellent plant at a tiny price. Grows rather upright. Leaves flushed wine underneath. Small profusely-produced flowers of medium blue **\$1.25**

***Sailor Boy**—Another good oldie. Vivid medium dark blue, good bloomer **\$1.25**

Starlight—Or Waterlily. Lovely pale blue flowers, dusty-green, rather rounded leaves **\$2.00**

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***Thirty-Two**—A dandy buy. Have some grand big plants of this. Flower about the shade of Lavender Lady, but much larger. Glossy neat foliage. Strictly an improved plant **\$1.75**

***Tinted Lady**—Or Sky Blue. Palest of the blues. A fine outstanding plant. Dark green, tapered leaves. As many as six crowns in some of these plants **\$1.75**

***Viking (Royal Sunset)**—One of the best of the dark blues. Slick, dark green leaves have quite a bit of red underneath **\$1.75**

Von Deitrich—Impressive new variety with gorgeous foliage. Fast grower, quite large. Medium blue flower **\$2.00**

***White Lady**—(Pat'd) **\$1.25**

NNOR—6 oz. size **\$1.00**
3 1-oz. size **\$1.00**

Sodium Selenate—Small vial treats 150 plants. Instructions **\$1.00**

Ethylene Dibromide Capsules—Soil fumigant. Safe, easy to use. Rids soil of nematodes. Instructions with box **\$1.00**

Wik-Fed Pots—Ivory only. 4" size.....Ea.——**\$1.15**
3 for ——**\$3.00**
6 for——**\$5.50**

Shipping Information—Plants sent in 2 inch pots unless requested otherwise. Cultural instructions included. List price includes packing and mailing cost. Orders \$5.00 and over sent special delivery or special handling if to box number or RFD. We guarantee safe arrival of plants. For your own protection, please remit by check or money order.

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